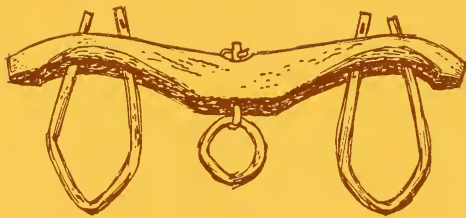




LINCOLN ROOM



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To
Carl Sandberg
may he live in
"Harmonium"


Sincerely

Fred Gronberg

San Diego, California

February 7, 1929





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LINCOLN STORIES



DAVID HOMER BATES

LINCOLN STORIES

TOLD BY HIM *in the*
Military Office in the War Department
DURING *the* CIVIL WAR



RECORDED BY *one of the Listeners*
DAVID HOMER BATES
Cipher Operator
and Author of "Lincoln in the Telegraph Office"



NEW YORK
WILLIAM EDWIN RUDGE, INC.
1926

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BY
DAVID HOMER BATES

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Lincoln Room

F O R E W O R D

BY CHARLES T. WHITE

OF THE *NEW YORK HERALD-TRIBUNE* STAFF

Another Lincoln book!

The indexers have been saying it every year to the seemingly endless procession of Lincoln books, and the end is not yet!

This time the entry is "Lincoln's Stories Told by Him in the Military Telegraph Office," recorded by one of the Listeners, David Homer Bates, and the book is a mate to "Lincoln in the Telegraph Office," which years ago established Mr. Bates with the reading public as an attractive writer and accurate historian.

As this book, like its predecessor, derives its chief value from its authenticity, there is an appropriate place at the beginning for Civil War data, herewith introduced:

Eight days after Sumter was fired on, the following message was flashed over the telegraph wires from Washington:

25
20
Found. Sandberg
Feb 56

April 22, 1861.

To DAVID McCARGO,
 Superintendent of Telegraphs,
 Pennsylvania Railroad Company,
 Altoona, Pa.

Send four of your best operators to Washington at once prepared to enter government telegraph service for the war.

(Signed) ANDREW CARNEGIE,
*Assistant General Manager,
 Military Railroads and Telegraphs.*

Altoona, Pa., April 23, 1861.

To ANDREW CARNEGIE,
 War Department, Washington, D. C.

Message received. Strouse from Mifflin, Brown from Pittsburgh, O'Brien from Greensburg, and Bates from Altoona, will start for Washington at once.

(Signed) DAVID McCARGO,
Superintendent of Telegraphs.

In response to Mr. Carnegie's message, the four telegraph operators arrived in Washington on April 25th and reported to him at the War Department, where a temporary office had been opened at the head of the first floor staircase.

Three of those operators are long since dead.

The fourth, David Homer Bates, died June 15, 1926, in his 83rd year. Mr. Bates became Manager of the War Department Telegraph Office, where he remained until the close of the Civil War, meeting President Lincoln every day and many nights during the succeeding four years until the day of his assassination. He was on duty all that dreadful night transmitting the hourly bulletins

written by Secretary Stanton at Lincoln's death bed, addressed to General John A. Dix in New York, for distribution by him to the press.

Mr. Bates recently yielded to the persuasion of friends, who learned he had a considerable fund of unpublished stories, conversations, and striking incidents, gathering up all the Lincoln story waifs, with a new book in mind.

And why not another Lincoln book, when it is a dependable contribution to Lincoln history?

The Lincoln story is not yet fully told. We shall have more books about Lincoln as writers discover letters and documents revealing new light on America's most fascinating character.

Mr. Bates' latest book is not intended as a study, or an analysis. It is supplemental in character, making the picture of Lincoln truer to life.

The years are revealing Lincoln to humanity as the greatest spiritual force of modern times—perhaps the best proof that the unseen is the eternal thing.

“Douglas is nothing; I am nothing; Truth is everything!” exclaimed this universal man. As people better learn to ally themselves to Truth, the living Lincoln is more eagerly accepted as an adequate interpretation of their ideals.

The soul which found growth in plucking a thorn and planting a rose blazed an illumined path for men of good will.

Whitman said if the ancient Greeks had had a man like Lincoln they would have made a god of him; Emerson, that if he had ruled in a period of

less facility for printing, he would have become mythological in a few years, like Aesop; Ingersoll, that he was the gentlest memory in the world; Stanton, in the death chamber in the Peterson house across the street from Ford's Theatre as the strong heart ceased beating, exclaimed, "Now he belongs to the ages!"

A mosaic of beauty, these tributes, and the fabric has been growing more beautiful with the years.

There came a turn in history—something necessary for progress—when an Asiatic Jewish peasant in the Upper Room girded himself with a towel and set an example of brotherhood.

Lincoln, almost from Nancy Hanks's knee, caught the vision of the Upper Room. Destiny led across bloody battlegrounds, but he would rather have chosen the conference table and the paths of peace.

Lincoln was a modern-minded man—the spiritual pioneer of a system of education yet to be; a system of education whose objective will be to *Give* rather than to *Get*!

Something happened in the Syrian Upper Room to make more understandable the democracy of love; and something happened in the War Department Telegraph Office working toward the same end.

A rare occasion, surely, when "Tom" Eckert, Homer Bates, Charlie Tinker, "Al" Chandler, and Bender Wilson—young, intense, enduring—worked for the crushing of the slaveholders' re-

bellion and the preservation of the Union. These young men through four bitter years labored shoulder to shoulder with Lincoln.

Mr. Bates testified that Lincoln was a cheerful, genial worker, with the habit of taking a clean sheet of paper and writing legibly, without interlineations or erasures, dispatches to generals, reprieves for the condemned, state papers of great importance, and even the first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation—all under the eyes of the “Knights of the Key” as they clicked off a never-ending stream of messages incident to the conduct of a great war.

Genial, serene, happy, and easy-working—so testify Bates, Eckert, Chandler, and Tinker. And who can tell about it all better than Mr. Bates with his diary, and his retentive memory?

John G. Nicolay and John Hay in an official way had day-by-day contact with Lincoln, but they were buffer men, there to attend to people; there to dam the flood of importunates; there to weigh the merits of the demands upon the President; to write and copy documents; in brief, to see to it that their chief's time was not wasted on comparatively unimportant things.

Lincoln, naturally secretive, maintained in the White House, and even with his secretaries, a befitting reserve and cautiousness, a degree of secretiveness, early discovered by Nicolay and Hay, and conformed to as a settled feature of their secretarial work.

A contemporary, Alexander K. McClure, of

the Philadelphia *Times*, was so impressed by this characteristic of self-containment, that he was prompted to write that while Nicolay and Hay knew Lincoln as *President*, they did not know him as a *man*.

The telegraphers of the War Department knew Lincoln as a *man*. They possessed the keys to things! With a cipher code of their own invention in daily use for important matters, they knew about every major matter under way, or contemplated, in the Northern army; and they were aware of much of what was transpiring in the Confederate government, thus sustaining a grasp of current doings and an intercourse with the President not so fully enjoyed by the President's own secretaries, for Lincoln spent more of his waking hours in the War Department Telegraph Office than in any other place.

Lincoln felt "safe" in the Telegraph Office. The operators were his "boys." Lincoln called Mr. Bates "Homer." Lincoln once addressed him as "the young man with the sore neck," Mrs. Eckert having kept a mustard plaster on all night, so that in the morning the affected spot was fiery red. He was somewhat partial in his regard for him because of that young man's ability in framing the government's cipher code, with a corresponding ability to decipher the code of the enemy, an exceptional asset, giving the Union government an inestimable advantage.

The possession of the Confederates' cipher code enabled Colonel Baker, head of the Secret Service,

to foil the Copperhead plot to burn New York City, and to trap correspondence between the Confederates in Richmond and their allies in Montreal and Halifax.

Lincoln had perfect confidence in the capable young men in the telegraph office, and his fondness was shown by an unusual degree of unreserve as soon as he crossed the threshold of the operating room. They were dubbed "The Sacred Three" by Albert Johnson, Stanton's Private Secretary.

There it was that Lincoln unbent—shook himself free, as far as possible, from his increasing burdens. The telegraph office came nearest anything to being a playground, a camaraderie rendezvous.

One thing was specially noted by the telegraphers—Lincoln was without vices, great or small. He was meticulous as to truth-telling; did not use profanity, or even by innuendo traduce an enemy or opponent. He did not drink intoxicating liquor, or use tobacco. Washington during the Civil War was a very "wet" city of 75,000, with about 3,600 drinking resorts. Nearly every one drank, and the men who did not smoke generally chewed tobacco.

"If I don't drink, it won't hurt me," was Lincoln's answer to a convivial friend who was sure a proffered glass of a celebrated brand would not "hurt" him.

"By Jinks!" Lincoln exclaimed one day, under pressure, in the telegraph office. Almost instantly he looked self-accused and apologetic. To the suggestion that "By jinks!" was not swearing, he re-

plied that according to what his mother told him when a child it *was swearing*, and wrong. Certainly a tribute to Nancy Hanks, sleeping in the Little Pigeon Creek Baptist graveyard in southern Indiana.

That he kindly remembered his father, blundering Tom Lincoln, was revealed one day when he quoted him.

“My father used to say, ‘Hug a bad bargain,’” said Lincoln, with the air of one who long ago had accepted it as a rule of life. (In Gilbert Tracy’s book.)

So Lincoln became a study to these young men in the telegraph office. They stood by as the pressure increased, and noted that he did not change his main direction in anything.

When he first assumed the reins of government, his cabinet associates apparently shared the common judgment that he would not be able to qualify under the responsibility. There was a disturbing suggestion that he turn over matters of large concern to Seward or Chase. But the far-seeing man smiled and pursued his course. At the beginning of the Civil War he seems to have been more grossly underassessed than any of our Presidents, while at the end of the period he came nearer than any other to being an object of adoration.

The men in the telegraph office at the beginning of the President’s administration sensed the general distrust of his ability, but it was not long before any apprehensions on this score were dis-

sipated. Within a year he was the recognized competent captain of the ship.

“Tom” Eckert never could forget what Lincoln did for him, for if ever a man was saved from the discard it was he.

Another story of surpassing interest is that Lincoln wrote the first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation at Eckert’s desk in the cipher room of the War Department telegraph office, ten feet from where Homer Bates regularly sat. Describing the framing of this historic document, Major Eckert says:

“Lincoln would look out of the window a little and then put his pen to paper, but he did not write much at a time. He would study between times, and when he had made up his mind he would put down a line or two, and then sit quiet for a few minutes.”

And this is part of the picture of the first draft of the document that gave freedom to four million slaves!

There is a goodly company of these intimate stories, little narratives saturated with wit and wisdom, and all more or less directly connected with war history.

It will not be easy for the reader to put the volume down once it is begun. The stories carry an overpowering sense of their truth.

In 1907, Robert T. Lincoln, Abraham’s surviving son, now a resident of Washington, after reading the magazine story by Mr. Bates wrote him a letter in which he said:

“I have just read in the September *Century* your concluding article with a personal interest that no one can have but myself. I cannot refrain from telling you how much I have been affected by the feeling you have shown of love and regard for my father. It is very gratifying to me. I must thank you earnestly for the pleasure I have had in your articles. They bring back very vividly the most exciting days of my life, and the reminiscences of my father make him seem to be alive again.”

The lovers of Lincoln are sure to feel deeply grateful to Mr. Bates for putting these little stories into permanent form.

C. T. W.

NEW YORK CITY,
December, 1925.

LINCOLN STORIES

Lincoln a Daily Visitor

DURING the Civil War, April, 1861, to April, 1865, Lincoln spent more of his waking hours in the War Department Telegraph Office than anywhere else outside of the White House.

He walked over every morning, noon, and evening, and made the Telegraph Office his rendezvous to get the latest news from the armies at the front.

While waiting there he talked freely with Major Thomas T. Eckert, our Chief, and with the Cipher Operators, Charles A. Tinker, Albert B. Chandler, and myself. The first three are long since dead.

Lincoln interspersed his talk with frequent stories, which were duly recorded by us and which are reproduced here. They are therefore undoubtedly authentic.

Captain D. V. Purington, of Chicago, in a letter to the *Century Magazine*, says, "Mr. Bates' reference in *Century* (July, 1907), to the fact that not all of the stories attributed to him were really his, calls to my mind an incident that corroborates Mr. Bates' position.

“Early in 1865, Mr. Lincoln visited the Army of the Potomac and the Army of the James. General Godfrey Weitzel was at that time commanding the 25th Army Corps, and Dutch Gap was within the limit of his command. Mr. Lincoln desired to see this particular work of the army engineers. Arrangements were made and he was escorted from Corps Headquarters by General Weitzel and his entire staff, of which the writer was a junior member. On the return of the party, Mr. Lincoln was invited to lunch with the General and his staff. It was my privilege to be seated at the table immediately opposite the President, and to listen to the conversation between him and General Weitzel. After we had all enjoyed some story of Mr. Lincoln’s (which I am sorry to have forgotten), General Weitzel said, ‘Mr. President, about what proportion of the stories attributed to you really belong to you?’ Mr. Lincoln replied, ‘I do not know; but of those I have seen, I should say about one-half.’”

Eight days after Sumter was fired on, I was called to Washington by a telegram to David McCargo, Superintendent of Telegraphs, Pennsylvania Railroad Company, from Andrew Carnegie, Assistant General Manager of U. S. Military Railroads and Telegraphs, dated April 22, 1861, to serve as an operator during the Civil War. I was Manager of the War Department Telegraph Office shortly after that time until the close of the war, during which period I met Mr. Lincoln every day and many nights.

Mr. Lincoln once said he was not a manufacturer but a retailer of stories and that he could not break himself of the habit, as he found it difficult to refrain from clinching an argument or emphasizing a good point by means of a story, and if it were not for these occasional stories he said he would die.

Lincoln's story-telling met his universal need, and the fact that he seemed to see the humorous side of life has caused many historians to wonder at the secret of his marvelous character.

Seldom Out of Washington

During the War Mr. Lincoln was absent from Washington several times. In 1862, he visited General Winfield Scott at West Point, and he went to Antietam to see General McClellan, and then to Fredericksburg to visit Generals Hooker and Burnside. He was at City Point several times to meet General Grant, and on April 4, 1865, he visited Richmond. He went to Gettysburg in November, 1863, to make his now well known address. In February, 1865, he was at Hampton Roads to meet the Confederate Peace Commissioners. Except on these and one or two other occasions, he spent all his time in Washington during the Civil War. He often visited the Soldiers' Home and Military Camps and was present at the Battle of Fort Stevens in July, 1864, the only time a President of the United States was actually on the field of battle under the guns of the enemy. He was always genial and not melancholy as so often rep-

resented, and he would laugh heartily at the end of a story. Lincoln's enunciation, like his handwriting, was clear and distinct. His voice was of tenor quality rather than low-pitched, conveying tenderness, sympathy and neighborliness.

It was Lincoln's habit to read the wire messages aloud, and when he came across the name of Jefferson Davis or Robert E. Lee, he would say, "Jeffy D.," or "Bobby" Lee.

The First Joke

The first witticism I recall was in the summer of 1861. While waiting for the unraveling of dispatches from the front, Lincoln would often recline upon an old hair cloth lounge. One evening he got up hurriedly and flicked from the lapel of his coat a small insect known to scientists as "cimex lectularius," in other words, a bed bug. He remarked, "Well, boys, I have been very fond of that old lounge, but as it has become a little buggy I fear I must stop using it."

The Beautiful Ellsworth Letter

The first great shock to President Lincoln after reaching Washington was the killing of his gallant young friend, Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth, at Alexandria, Virginia, on May 24, 1861, by the proprietor of the Marshall House, from whose roof Colonel Ellsworth removed a Rebel flag. Ellsworth, little more than a boy, magnetic, highly intelligent, was like a son to Lincoln, having been a student in his law office in Springfield, and ac-

accompanied him to Washington. The young officer almost unaided had raised a full regiment in New York City, rushed them to Washington, drilled them and inspired them with his own intrepidity.

Early on the morning of the 24th when I delivered to him a dispatch announcing the death of his gallant young friend he was terribly grief-stricken. Of all the thousands of eloquent expressions which in sermon, address, poem or editorial the tragedy inspired throughout the North, none was so beautiful as the letter from President Lincoln to the bereaved parents in Mechanickville, New York:

Washington, D. C., May 25, 1861.

To the Father and Mother of Elmer E. Ellsworth,

My Dear Sir and Madam:

In the untimely loss of your noble son, our affliction here is scarcely less than your own. So much of promised usefulness to one's country and of bright hopes for one's self and friends, have rarely been so suddenly darkened as in his fall. In size, in years, and in youthful appearance, a boy only, his power to command men was surpassingly great. This power, combined with a fine intellect, and indomitable energy and a taste altogether military, constituted in him, as seemed to me, the best natural talent, in that department, I ever knew. And yet he was singularly modest and deferential in social intercourse. My acquaintance with him began less than two years ago; yet through the latter half of the intervening period it was as intimate as the disparity of our ages and my engrossing engagements would permit. To me, he appeared to have no indulgences or pastimes; and I never heard him utter a profane or intemperate word. What was conclusive of his good heart, he never forgot

his parents. The honors he labored for so laudably, and, in the sad end, so gallantly gave his life, he meant for them no less than for himself.

In the hope that it may be no intrusion upon the sacredness of your sorrow, I have ventured to address you this tribute to the memory of my young friend, and your brave and early fallen child.

May God give you the consolation which is beyond all earthly power.

Sincerely your friend in common affliction,

A. LINCOLN.

Ellsworth only two days before had written this letter to his parents:

HEADQUARTERS, 1ST ZOUAVES, CAMP LINCOLN,

Washington, D. C., May 23, 1861.

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER:

The Regiment is ordered to move across the river tonight.

We have no means of knowing what reception we are to meet with. I am inclined to the opinion that our entrance to the City of Alexandria will be hotly contested.

Should this happen, my dear parents, it may be my lot to be injured in some manner. Whatever may happen, cherish this consolation that I am engaged in the performance of a sacred duty and tonight thinking over the probabilities of tomorrow and the occurrences of the past, I am perfectly content to accept whatever my fortune may be, confident that He who noteth even the fate of a sparrow will have some purpose even in the fate of one like me.

My darling and everloved parents, goodbye, God bless, protect, and care for you.

ELMER.

Bull Run Bulletins

In July, 1861, the first severe reverse of the Civil War occurred at the Battle of Bull Run, and McDowell's forces were pushed back from Manassas Junction.

When this battle was fought, the military telegraph-line had reached Fairfax Court-House, which I visited two days before the battle with Mr. Carnegie, and an improvised office had been opened at that point. Communication with General McDowell's headquarters at the front was maintained by means of a corps of mounted couriers, organized by Andrew Carnegie. These couriers passed back and forth all day long between Fairfax and the front. Lincoln hardly left his seat in our office and waited with deep anxiety for each succeeding dispatch. At times during the awful day, General Winfield Scott would confer with the President or Secretary Cameron for a short period and then depart to put into effect some urgent measures for protecting the Capitol.

All the morning and well along into the afternoon, General McDowell's telegrams were more or less encouraging, and Lincoln and his advisers waited with eager hope, believing that Beauregard was being pushed back; but all at once dispatches ceased coming. At first this was taken to mean that McDowell was moving farther away from the telegraph, and then, as the silence became prolonged, a strange fear seized upon the assembled watchers that perhaps all was not well. Suddenly

the telegraph instrument became alive again, and the short sentence "Our army is retreating" was spelled out in the Morse characters. This brief announcement was followed by meager details concerning the first great disaster that had befallen our troops and the panic that followed.

The crowded telegraph office was quickly deserted by all except the operators, although Lincoln returned at intervals until after mid-night, shortly before which the outlying office at Fairfax Court-House was abandoned. When morning dawned, our demoralized troops began to straggle, and then to pour in in an ever increasing stream of frightened humanity over Long Bridge into Washington, the immediate capture of which then seemed to be, and really was, within the power of the Confederate army, if only they had pressed their advantage. Consternation reigned supreme, and all realized that a great crisis of the war, the next after Sumter, was upon us.

The Telegram Drawer

Lincoln's habit was to go immediately to the drawer each time he came into our room and read over the telegrams, beginning at the top, until he came to the one he had seen at his last previous visit. When this point was reached he frequently said, "Well, boys, I am down to raisins." After we had heard this curious remark a number of times, one of us asked him what it meant. He thereupon told the story of the little girl who celebrated her birthday by eating very freely of good things, top-

ping off with raisins for desert. During the night she was taken violently ill, and when the Doctor arrived she was busy casting up her accounts. The genial Doctor, scrutinizing the contents of the vessel, noticed some small black objects that had just appeared and remarked to the anxious parents that all danger was now passed, as the child was "down to raisins." "So," Lincoln said, "when I reach the message in this pile which I saw on my last previous visit, I know I need go no farther."

McClellan and Lincoln

McClellan had no confidence in Lincoln's military ability or discretion, and he believed information communicated to him would be divulged to Congressmen and others, and he therefore thought it best to give him as little news as possible.

It must be borne in mind that in the early part of the war, before Lincoln's unique personality and masterly qualities became known to the members of his Cabinet, heads of departments, and others, his freedom of intercourse with the public and the readiness with which he gave out military information had been taken advantage of by newspaper correspondents.

On November 1, 1861, the President issued an order placing Lieutenant-General Winfield Scott upon the retired list, and appointing Major-General George B. McClellan to the command of the army of the United States in his place.

On October 21, 1861, a message from General Stone, near Poolsville, Maryland, was received at

Army Headquarters over the hastily constructed telegraph line, stating that his troops had moved across the Potomac at Edward's Ferry, and after an encounter with the enemy had been repulsed with considerable loss, including Colonel E. D. Baker, who was killed. McClellan not being in his office, Eckert started out to find him, taking from the stable an ugly tempered mare, dubbed the "man-killer." He rode over to Fitz-John Porter's headquarters across the Potomac, where he learned that McClellan had returned to the city. Eckert came back, and finding that McClellan had gone to the White House, dismounted, walked across Lafayette Square, and in Lincoln's presence, delivered the message to McClellan, who did not tell the President what it contained.

Eckert said the President made no criticism of his action; but upon more careful reflection Eckert concluded he had made a mistake, because, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army Lincoln outranked both the Secretary of War and the commanding general.

Charles Carlton Coffin, a newspaper writer, said of the death of Colonel Baker:

"I doubt if any other of the many tragic events of Lincoln's life ever stunned him so much as that unheralded message, which came over the wires on that mournful day, October 21, 1861."

Colonel Baker had succeeded Lincoln in Congress, and between the two there was always a close friendship formed during the years in which they had practised law in Illinois. Lincoln's second son,

who died in 1853, had been named Edward Baker Lincoln. The President, no doubt, keenly felt the death of his friend as a great personal loss; and besides, it must have helped to make him realize that the terrible struggle in which the country was engaged would demand the sacrifice of many more of such useful lives.

It is trite to say that McClellan began his military career in the Civil War period under extraordinarily favorable conditions, and that Lincoln had so high an opinion of his abilities as to raise him, a man only thirty-five years of age, to the position of Commanding-General of the United States Army to succeed General Winfield Scott, whose first laurels were gained at Lundy's Lane in 1812. And yet, within less than six months the relations between the Administration and McClellan had become so strained that the President was forced to write him an impressive letter:

Washington, April 9, 1862.

MAJOR-GENERAL McCLELLAN.

My dear Sir:

Your dispatches, complaining that you are not properly sustained, while they do not offend me, do pain me very much.

I beg to assure you that I have never written you or spoken to you in greater kindness of feeling than now, nor with a fuller purpose to sustain you, so far as in my most anxious judgment I consistently can; but you must act.

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.

Lincoln's Judgment of the Monitor

Lincoln was very much interested in the laying of a section of the abandoned Atlantic cable by the Military Telegraph Corps across Chesapeake Bay from Cape Charles to Fort Monroe, which was completed in March, 1862, just in time to have transmitted over it General Wool's telegram of March 9th to the Secretary of War stating that Ericsson's iron-clad Monitor had arrived and would proceed to take care of the Merrimac.

Mr. Lincoln later was much pleased to receive General Wool's dispatch announcing the victory of the Monitor, which, he had prophesied to Mr. Bushnell some time before, would prove to be an innovation in naval warfare.

Colonel William C. Church's *Life of John Ericsson*, page 249, referring to the conference of Mr. Lincoln with the Naval Board early in 1861, quotes this letter from Mr. Bushnell (one of the contractors who built the Monitor) addressed to Gideon Welles, Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy:

"All were surprised at the novelty of the plan, some advised trying it, others ridiculed it. The conference was closed by Mr. Lincoln's remarking 'All I have to say is what the girl said when she put her foot in the stocking—it strikes me there is something in it.'"

"Colt" and "Horse"

From January, 1862, until the close of the war, the telegraphic reins of government were held by the firm and skilful hand of Edwin M. Stanton,

Secretary of War, and their guiding influence upon the affairs of the nation were all-powerful for good. Dating, also, from the appointment of Stanton to the Cabinet, Lincoln made the War Department Telegraph Office his lounging-place, and we saw him daily, although our office at that time was crowded and inconvenient.

In 1862, General Schenck, who was in command of our forces near Alexandria, sent a telegram from Drainsville, Virginia, announcing a slight skirmish with the enemy, resulting in the capture of thirty or forty prisoners, all armed with Colt's revolvers. As Lincoln read the message, he turned to the operator who handed it to him, and said, with a twinkle in his eye, that the newspapers were given to such exaggeration in publishing army news that we might be sure when General Schenck's dispatch appeared in print next day, all the little Colt's revolvers would have grown into horse pistols.

As illustrating the reputed density of an Englishman's mind in the matter of American jokes, the following is noted:

In March, 1905, I went abroad on the Cunard liner "Caronia," and on Friday evening before arriving at Queenstown made an address on Lincoln in the dining room in which I told the story of General Schenck's message and President Lincoln's remark.

The next morning, on deck, an Englishman accosted me remarking, "Ah, Mr. Bates, I was much interested in your address last evening, par-

ticularly as I had met General Schenck when he was U. S. Consul in England. I am curious to know if the newspapers the day following General Schenck's dispatch did actually say the prisoners were equipped with horse pistols." I answered that as the time was so far back I could not recall.

Short-legged Joke

On one occasion an official letter was received from John Wintrup, our operator at Wilmington, Delaware, on the route of the military line from Washington to Fort Monroe. Wintrup's signature was written in a rather bold hand with the final letter quite large, almost like a capital, and ending in flourishes which partly obscured the name itself. Lincoln's eye dropped on this letter as it lay on my cipher-desk, and after satisfying his curiosity as to the peculiar signature he said, "That reminds me of a short-legged man in a big overcoat, the tail of which was so long it wiped out his footprints in the snow."

"Chew and Choke"

While Mr. Lincoln was sometimes critical and even sarcastic when events moved slowly, or when obstacles were formidable, he never failed to commend when good news came, as shown by the following:

August 17, 1864—10.30 A.M.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT,
City Point, Va.

I have seen your dispatch expressing your unwillingness to break your hold where you are. Neither am I

willing. Hold on with a bulldog grip and chew and choke as much as possible.

A. LINCOLN.

Freedom Drafted at Eckert's Desk

Until recently it has not been known, except by a few persons, that Lincoln wrote the first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation while seated at Eckert's desk in the cipher-room of the War Department Telegraph Office. Some of the incidents connected with the writing of that immortal document have been recorded for me by Eckert as follows:

“As you know, the President came to the office every day and invariably sat at my desk while there. Upon his arrival early one morning in June, 1862, shortly after McClellan's ‘Seven Days’ Fight,’ he asked me for some paper, as he wanted to write something special. I procured some foolscap and handed it to him. He then sat down and began to write. I do not recall whether the sheets were loose or had been made into a pad. There must have been at least a quire. He would look out of the window a while and then put his pen to paper, but he did not write much at once. He would study between times and when he had made up his mind he would put down a line or two, and then sit quiet for a few minutes. After a time he would resume his writing, only to stop again at intervals to make some remark to me or to one of the cipher-operators, as a fresh dispatch from the front was handed to him.

“Once his eye was arrested by the sight of a large spiderweb stretched from the lintel of the portico to the side of the outer window-sill. This spiderweb was an institution of the cipher-room and harbored a large colony of exceptionally big ones. We frequently watched their antics, and Assistant Secretary Watson dubbed them ‘Major Eckert’s Lieutenants.’ Lincoln commented on the web, and I told him that my lieutenants would soon report and pay their respects to the President. Not long after a big spider appeared at the cross-roads and tapped several times on the strands, whereupon five or six others came out from different directions. Then would follow what appeared to be a conference among the spiders, all of which the President noted. Scanning what he already had written, the President would remain motionless for a minute or two as he buckled his mind to what he wanted to pen next. Another glance at the spiders, a hitch to the chair, a glance out of the window, and then, with the right words in mind, he’d write a few lines, pausing to read over the document as far as he’d gone.

“He didn’t write much at a time, and he didn’t write rapidly, but what he did write was beautifully done, with few or no interlineations or erasures. After the first day or two of this kind of work all four cipher men knew what he was doing, as he made no secret about it to Eckert, who was guardian of the draft.

“That’s the way the Emancipation Proclamation grew under Lincoln’s hand in the telegraph

office, with a new paragraph every now and then. As I said in the beginning, the spiders intermit- tently had his attention. What they were doing, especially as they threw out filaments and found anchorages for them, like a general establishing new lines of communications—all such marvelous little things challenged Lincoln's thought. What the spiders were doing seemed to lubricate the big man's mental machinery, much as a jest or pertinent anecdote would do at other times."

Lincoln's War Dispatches

During the entire war, the files of the War Department Telegraph Office were punctuated with short, pithy dispatches from Lincoln. For instance, on May 24, 1862, Mr. Lincoln sent ten or twelve telegrams to various generals; on May 25th as many more, and from one to a dozen nearly every succeeding day for months. It is also worthy of remark that Lincoln's numerous telegrams, even those sent by him during his two weeks' visit to City Point in March and April, 1865, and the less than half dozen he sent after his return to Washington, were almost without exception in his own handwriting, his copy being remarkably neat and legible, with seldom an erasure or correction.

Lincoln's Love of Humor

The Civil War bred a fine lot of humorists whose writings were a source of enjoyment to Mr. Lincoln. He was particularly fond of Artemus

Ward (Charles F. Browne), Petroleum V. Nasby (David R. Locke), K. Philander Doesticks, Josh Allen, and Orpheus C. Kerr, and when anything from them appeared, he was likely to read it to the operators. He also liked the one whose letters were dated from "Confedrite Cross Roads" and another from "Mackerelville." The latter often told of skirmishes between the Home Guards of Mackerelville and the enemy, ending always in the defeat of the latter. He described the result thus, "Victory perched upon the banners of the conqueror."

Lincoln thought this remark ridiculously funny. "Why," he said, "that's where victory always does perch."

Lincoln also read to us operators from the California humorist Lieutenant Derby, who told of some wonderful hair restorative, a bottle of which fell and broke over his leather trunk on which next day there appeared a fine growth of hair.

Another one of Lieutenant Derby's stories told of his survey of a three-mile railroad from Sacramento which lengthened to twenty miles because his pedometer had kept on registering the distance while he danced at a wayside hotel on the route of the proposed road.

Lincoln wrote Petroleum V. Nasby at Toledo to make him a visit, which he did.

I have a card in Lincoln's handwriting reading "Josh Allen, Troops going to smoke," but I cannot recall the incident to which it refers.

There was popular, many years ago, a pictorial

book of nonsense to which Lincoln once referred in my presence. He said he had seen such a book, and recited from it this rhyme as illustrating his idea that the best method of allaying anger was to adopt a conciliatory attitude. The picture shown was that of a maiden seated on a stile smiling at an angry cow near-by in the field, saying,

I will sit on this stile
And continue to smile,
'Til I soften the heart of that cow.

Acorns and News

One day Albert Johnson accompanied the President from the Telegraph Office to the White House. Passing across the tree-shaded lawn, Albert stopped and began pushing the leaves. "What are you doing, Albert?" "Mr. President, I am trying to find some acorns for my boy Harrison." "Now Albert," the President said, "you surely don't expect to find acorns under a sycamore tree, do you? Wait until you come to an oak tree, and you will find plenty."

One morning Lincoln, accompanied by Seward, came to the office with a pleasant "Good Morning—what news?" Bender Wilson answered, "Good news, because there is none." Whereupon Lincoln rejoined, "Ah, my friend, that rule does not always hold good, for a fisherman does not consider it good luck when he can't get a bite."

On one occasion Mr. Lincoln came to the office and asked for the latest news. He was told that General McClellan was on his way from Arling-

ton, that our pickets still held Balls Cross Roads, and that no firing had been heard since sunset. He inquired if any firing had been heard before sunset and upon being answered in the negative, laughingly replied, "That reminds me of the man who, speaking of a supposed freak of nature, said, 'The child was black from his hips down,' and upon being asked the color from the hips up, replied, 'why, black, of course!'"

Big Shuck—Little Ear

John L. Lane, Evanston, Ill., writes to the *New York Times Book Review*, August 22, 1904, criticising Churchill's *Crisis*, and tells this story:

"As to General Grant's story of Lincoln, I would say it is true, as I had it soon after Lincoln's remark was made to Grant, by one who was present and heard it.

"Grant had said that after the visit of the Peace Commission in Hampton Roads, and when Grant was present after the Commission left, Alexander H. Stephens being one of the Commissioners, Lincoln asked Grant if he had seen the overcoat Stephens wore, and if he (Grant) had seen Stephens take it off. On replying that he had, Lincoln said, 'Well, didn't you think it was the biggest shuck and the littlest ear you ever did see?' Grant fully understood, as would anybody that knew anything of corn growing in the Mississippi Valley, that Lincoln was likening the overcoat to the great husks our Indian corn often have when the ear inside is very small. As Stephens was a small dried-

up old man, and the overcoat a very large one, Lincoln's remark was pertinent and humorous."

Fast Day

In connection with the observance of the first national fast day, September 5, 1861, Colonel William Bender Wilson, in his *Acts and Actors of the Civil War*, page 111, gives an account of the President's visit to the telegraph office that morning. As he entered the room he saw George Low, one of the junior operators, at work cleaning a blue vitriol battery. "Well, sonny, mixing the juices, eh?" the President inquired. Then sitting down and adjusting his spectacles, which were specially made with short spring ends to clasp the sides of his head just back of his eyes, he became aware that all the operators were busy, and a smile broke over his countenance as he remarked, "Gentlemen, this is fast day, and I am pleased to observe that you are working as fast as you can; the proclamation was mine, and that is my interpretation of its bearing upon you. Now we will have a little talk with Governor Morton at Indianapolis. I want to give him a lesson in geography. The Bowling Green affair I set him all right upon; now I will tell him something about Muldraugh Hill. Morton is a good fellow, but at times he is the skeeredest man I know of." This talk with Governor Morton was in consequence of the latter's telegram expressing great anxiety concerning the Confederate General Zollicoffer's reported movement toward Louisville. Lincoln told Morton over the wire that

he hoped the report was true, as in such event our troops would be able to advance and occupy Cumberland Gap, which Lincoln claimed was a very important strategical position.

Lincoln's Long Hours

There were many times when Lincoln remained in the telegraph office till late at night, and occasionally all night long. One of these occasions was during Pope's short disastrous campaign of 1862, ending in the second battle of Bull Run. Lincoln came to the War Department Office several times on August 26th, the first of those strenuous, anxious days, and after supper he came again, prepared to stay all night, in order to receive the latest news from Pope, who was at the front, and from McClellan, who was still at Alexandria.

Hour after hour of the long night passed with no news from the front until just before dawn, when the following was received:

A. LINCOLN, President. August 27, 1862—4.25 A.M.

Intelligence received within twenty minutes informs me that the enemy are advancing and have crossed Bull Run bridge; if it is not destroyed, it probably will be. The forces sent by us last night held it until that time.

H. HAUPT.

Lincoln, who was keeping vigil with the telegraph operators, at once penned this answer:

August 27, 1862—7.15 A.M.

COLONEL HAUPT.

What became of our forces which held the bridge till twenty minutes ago, as you say? A. LINCOLN.

Receiving no reply immediately, Lincoln telegraphed again:

War Department, August 27, 1862.

COLONEL HAUPT.

Is the railroad bridge over Bull Run destroyed?

A. LINCOLN.

To this Colonel Haupt replied:

August 28, 1862.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

Colonel Scammon held Bull Run Bridge a long time against a very superior force, retired at last in perfect order.

H. HAUPT.

Lincoln and Haupt

During the next few days, Lincoln sent other brief messages of inquiry to Colonel Haupt, upon whom he, as well as Secretary Stanton and General Halleck, seemed to depend for early information far more than upon Pope or McClellan, as shown by the following additional telegrams (taken from Haupt's *Reminiscences* p. 107, et seq.)

War Department, Aug. 28, 1862—2.40 P.M.

COLONEL HAUPT.

Yours received. How do you learn that the rebel forces at Manassas are large and commanded by several of their best generals?

A. LINCOLN.

August 28, 1862.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

One of Colonel Scammon's surgeons was captured and released; he communicated the information. One of our

firemen was captured and escaped; he confirms it and gives important details. General McClellan has just seen him. . . .

H. HAUPT.

August 29, 1862.

COLONEL HAUPT.

What news from direction of Manassas Junction? What generally?

A. LINCOLN.

August 29, 1862.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN AND GENERAL HALLECK.

General Pope was at Centreville this morning at six o'clock. Seemed to be in good spirits. . . .

H. HAUPT.

August 30, 1862—9.00 A.M.

COLONEL.

What news?

A. LINCOLN.

August 30, 1862—8.50 P.M.

COLONEL HAUPT.

Please send me the latest news.

A. LINCOLN.

August 30, 1862.

A. LINCOLN, President.

Our operator has reached Manassas. Hears no firing of importance. . . . We have reestablished telegraphic communication with Manassas. . . .

. . . Our telegraph operators and railway employees are entitled to great credit. They have been advanced pioneers, occupying the posts of danger; and the exploit of penetrating to Fairfax and bringing off the wounded when they supposed that 20,000 rebels were on their front and flanks, was one of the boldest performances I have ever heard of.

H. HAUPT.

August 31, 1862—7.10 A.M.

COLONEL HAUPT.

What news? Did you hear any firing this morning?

A. LINCOLN.

August 31, 1862.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

No news received as yet this morning. Firing heard distinctly in direction of Brisco at six o'clock.

H. HAUPT.

And so the anxious hours passed, with Lincoln in the Telegraph Office on the watch until it was known that for the second time our army had met defeat on the fatal field of Bull Run.

President's Quick Grasp of War Technique

General Haupt, in his *Reminiscences*, makes this reference to Lincoln's anxiety, "During this protracted engagement, August 24 and September 2, 1862, the President was in a state of extreme anxiety and could have slept but little. Inquiries came from him at all hours of the night asking for the latest news from the front." The cipher-operators could confirm this statement even if Lincoln's messages here quoted did not establish the fact. They also clearly show that for a man who never had a day's military experience (if, strictly speaking, we may except the farcical episode in his career in the Black Hawk Indian Campaign in 1832), Lincoln, who by virtue of the presidential office was Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, possessed an almost in-

tuitive perception of the practical requirements of that responsible office, and that in his usual common-sense way of doing things, he was performing the duties of that position in the most intelligent and effective manner.

Lincoln and Busybodies

During Burnside's unsuccessful campaign before Fredericksburg late in 1862, there was a great deal of newspaper talk about certain of his generals, formerly under McClellan, being out of sympathy with and jealous of Burnside; and the court-martial of Fitz-John Porter then in progress had as a basis for its charges the contention that Porter failed to support Pope promptly in August, 1862, because of his partizan friendship for McClellan. The President showed no surprise when he received the following telegram from his unknown advisor:

HIS EXCELLENCY, A. LINCOLN, President.

Richmond campaign, Franklin remaining, foregone conclusion.

ROBERT A. MAXWELL.

No reply was made to this foolish dispatch, nor to several others which were afterward received from Maxwell. But at the time of the New York draft riots, these dispatches were exchanged:

Philadelphia, July 15, 1863.

A. LINCOLN, President.

Albert Gallatin Thorp, informed that Seymour is well controlled beyond safe limits. Why hesitate.

ROBERT A. MAXWELL.

Washington, D. C., July 15, 1863.

ROBERT A. MAXWELL, Philadelphia.

Your dispatch of to-day received, but I do not understand it.

A. LINCOLN.

Maxwell's dispatch no doubt had reference to Governor Seymour of New York, who at that time, during the progress of the draft riots, which culminated on that day, July 15, 1863, was supposed, at least by the War Department officials, to be in sympathy with the Confederate Government, and particularly with the efforts of their Northern agents, Jacob Thompson and others in Canada, to incite opposition in the North to the Administration, and to hinder the draft then being enforced under Lincoln's proclamation of June 15, 1863, for one hundred thousand men, for six months' service.

Lincoln Defends Thomas

The next Maxwell telegram of record was as follows:

New York City, 1.30 P.M., Sept. 23, 1863.

HIS EXCELLENTY, A. LINCOLN, President.

Will Buell's testamentary executor George Thomas ever let Rosecrans succeed? Is Bragg dumb enough to punish Thomas severely and disgracingly?

ROBERT A. MAXWELL.

The President held this impertinent telegram until his evening visit to the War Department. Meantime, no doubt thinking that some defense of General Thomas by the Administration might

serve to allay the already evidently widespread distrust and anxiety, he wrote the following dispatch at the White House and brought it to the telegraph office and handed it to Mr. Tinker for transmission:

[CIPHER]

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
Washington, Sept. 23, 1863.

ROBERT A. MAXWELL, New York.

I hasten to say that in the state of information we have here nothing could be more ungracious than to indulge any suspicion towards General Thomas. It is doubtful whether his heroism and skill exhibited last Sunday afternoon has ever been surpassed in the world.

A. LINCOLN.

But the message had been in Tinker's hands only a few minutes, when Lincoln came over to the cipher-desk and said, "I guess I will not send this; I can't afford to answer every crazy question asked me."

Sheridan Tall Enough "on a Pinch"

In March, 1865, Sheridan, with his chief of staff, Captain Forsyth, rode over from White House to City Point. Robert Lincoln informed his father, who was on the River Queen, that "Little Phil" had arrived. The President hastened ashore and went to Colonel Bower's tent to express his personal congratulations to Sheridan, which he did in the most sincere and graceful manner, winding up with this remark, "General Sheridan, when this peculiar war began I thought a cavalryman

should be at least six feet four high; but," still holding Sheridan's hand in his earnest grasp and looking down upon the little general, "I have changed my mind—five feet four will do on a pinch." Sheridan measured five feet four and a half, and at this time weighed only one hundred and forty-one pounds; but in the saddle "he weighed a ton," as his soldiers were wont to say. At the meeting with Lincoln he appeared without sword, sash, belt, or epaulets, and with his old brown slouch-hat in his hand.

"Hunkered Out a Chair"

William B. Wilson, the first manager of our office, tells this story:

"We always set apart a large chair for the President. One day he came in alone and walked over to the instrument table and began to write. Almost immediately there was a call at that table and Operator Flesher, in answering it, leaned over Mr. Lincoln's shoulder, who turned and said, "Have I hunkered you out of your chair?"

The generally accepted measurement of Lincoln's height is six feet four inches, when standing erect. He stooped slightly when walking. He usually wore a high silk hat, which made him look taller than he really was. He told us operators one day a man had asked him how tall he was. He told him. The man then asked how long a man's legs of his height should be. Lincoln said, "Just long enough to reach the ground."

Grandfather "Waived"

During the Civil War, when Secretary Salmon P. Chase endeavored to raise a large sum of money to carry on the war, some financial magnates came to Washington from New York and were brought to the Telegraph Office where Mr. Lincoln happened to be. Their spokesman began to apologize for seeming to intrude, remarking that he did not like to find fault with the President. Mr. Lincoln said, "Never mind, go ahead with your story. You remind me of the grandson who threatened to whip his grandfather, but refrained from doing so because he was his grandfather. The old man said, 'Come on, I waive the grandfather.' Gentlemen, go on with your plan; I waive the Presidency."

Family Telegrams

Here are two telegrams out of a large number in which Lincoln referred to his children in an affectionate manner.

August 31, 1864.

MRS. A. LINCOLN, Manchester, Vt.

All reasonably well. Bob not here yet. How is dear Tad?

A. LINCOLN.

September 8, 1864.

MRS. A. LINCOLN, Manchester, Vt.

All well including Tad's pony and the goats.

A. LINCOLN.

On another occasion Lincoln wrote to Mrs. Lincoln as follows:

“ . . . Tell dear Tad poor Nanny goat is lost. . . . The day you left, Nanny was found resting herself and chewing her little cud on the middle of Tad’s bed, but now she’s gone. . . .

Lincoln and Little Tad

The President’s affection for his youngest boy, Tad, was such that they were together much of the time, even while the father was receiving callers or attending to official business in the White House, and nearly always when visiting the army at the front or in the defenses around Washington. They came to the War Department together very often.

Many stories are told of Tad’s mischievous pranks, and of his father’s close companionship with his favorite boy. Mr. Tinker records that on one occasion Lincoln came into the telegraph office chuckling to himself over a fairy story-book that some one had given to Tad, who was holding his father’s hand as he entered the room. He thereupon repeated the story to the cipher-operators. It told how a mother hen tried to raise a brood of chicks, but was much disturbed over the conduct of a sly old fox who ate several of the youngsters while still professing to be an honest fox; so the anxious mother had a serious talk with the old reynard about his wickedness. “Well, what was the result?” one of us asked, when it appeared that Lincoln did not intend to continue his narrative. “The fox reformed,” said Lincoln, his eyes twinkling, “and became a highly respected paymaster in the army, and now I am wondering which one he is.” The significance of this reference is in the fact

that about that time there were rumors of fraud in the Paymaster's Department.

Tad's "Black Hand" Prank

My comrade, Madison Buell, has given an account of a visit of Lincoln to the War Department accompanied, as usual, by Tad, who wandered through the cipher-office into the adjoining room, where the telegraph instruments were located on a marble-topped table. In pure mischief Tad thrust his fingers into an ink-well and wiped them across several of the white tops, making a horrible mess. Buell seized the boy by the collar and marched him at arm's length into the cipher-room, where his father was seated looking over the latest dispatches which he had taken from the little drawer of the cipher-desk. Each one of the trio was surprised and a little embarrassed, Buell perhaps more so than the other two. Tad held up his inky fingers, while Buell, with a look of disgust on his face, pointed through the open door to the row of marble tops smeared with ink. Lincoln took in the situation at once, and without asking for further explanation, lifted his boy in his arms and left the office, saying in a pleasant tone, "Come, Tad; Buell is abusing you."

Tale of Two Hens

After the good news from Gettysburg, Lincoln appeared in the Telegraph Office and told Albert Chandler, cipher-operator, these two stories: One was called a hen walker and consisted of a stick attached to one leg of the hen who, in walking

around, would be propelled forward until she was out of the garden.

The other was called an egg persuader, consisting of a hinged bottom in the nest so that when the hen laid an egg it would drop through out of her sight, whereupon the hen would try to lay another egg.

Story of a Misfit Hat

Once, after one of us had related Thomas Hood's story of the spoiled child, when the fat aunt sat down on the baby which the nurse had left on the arm chair, Lincoln was reminded of this incident:

Scene: A Theatre.

"When the play had already been started, a gentleman had placed his hat in the seat next to him and was deeply interested in the play, not noticing a stout lady coming in and sitting down on the hat. 'Madam,' he says, 'I knew that hat would not fit you when I saw you try it on.'"

Getting a Baby to Its Father

Lincoln had a sympathetic heart for any one in trouble, as shown in this incident:

One day he entered the office from the hallway and said there was a woman outside who was crying, and he wished we would find out what her trouble was. On inquiry we learned that she was trying to get a pass to go to the Army of the Potomac to take her baby to its father, who had never seen it. She was crying because the Secretary of War had said she could not go to the Army to see her husband.

Lincoln sent for Stanton's Secretary and asked him to send a furlough to the man and have him come to Washington to see his wife and child. Lincoln then went out and told the sorrowing woman he had arranged to have her husband come to Washington to see her and his child. She was overjoyed at the good news.

"Small Potatoes"

Comrade Atwater was stationed at the Washington Navy Yard much of the time during the war, and has given the following account of a visit which Lincoln made on one occasion when experiments were being made with rocket signals:

"One evening a party of six or eight, including Mr. Lincoln, came to the Navy Yard and proceeded to the bulkhead, where they had arranged to demonstrate the workings of certain signalling rockets, several of which were sent up with good results. When the last one was tried, each one in the party watched it as it soared aloft, leaving its streams of fire trailing behind, but when half-way up it exploded prematurely and fell to the water.

"Well," remarked Lincoln, 'small potatoes and few in a hill.' I had never heard the expression before, and it fastened itself in my mind," said Atwater.

Appraising the Drama

I am led to mention Lincoln's love of Shakespeare because in the winter of 1865, a few months before his death, he went a number of times to see

James H. Hackett play Falstaff, and for a week or more he carried in his pocket a well-worn copy in small compass of *Macbeth*, and one of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, selections from both of which he read aloud to us in the telegraph office. On one occasion I was his only auditor, and he recited several passages to me with as much interest apparently as if there had been a full house. He was very fond of Hackett personally, and of the character Falstaff, and frequently repeated some of the latter's quaint sallies. I recall that in his recitation for my benefit he criticised some of Hackett's readings. He wrote a letter to that gentleman on August 17, 1863, in which he said:

For one of my age I have seen very little of the drama. The first presentation of Falstaff I ever saw was yours, here last winter or spring. Perhaps the best compliment I can pay is to say, as I truly can, I am very anxious to see it again. I think nothing equals *Macbeth*. It is wonderful. . . .

A. K. McClure, in his *Life of Lincoln*, speaks of the latter's love of Shakespeare and mentions an interview between Lincoln, Judge Kelley, and an actor named McDonough, during which Lincoln took from a shelf a well-thumbed copy of Shakespeare and, turning to *Henry IV*, read with discrimination an extended passage, which he said was not surpassed in wit and humor by anything else in literature. The omission from the acted play of the passage in question was remarked upon by Lincoln as curious.

McClure adds that all these incidents show an

intimate acquaintance with the text of Shakespeare's writings and not only so, but a keen and discriminating appreciation of their depth and meaning.

Lincoln and Murdoch

James E. Murdoch, of Cincinnati, an actor of repute before the war, upon learning that his son had enlisted and was in camp at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, went there to say good-bye to his boy. He whiled away some of his otherwise idle time in camp in making patriotic speeches and giving recitations, to the great delight of the officers and men of the regiment. Afterward he visited other regiments and companies at enlistment points and also at the front, devoting a large part of his time for several years to the task of contributing to the comfort of the soldiers in the army through the medium of the United States Sanitary Commission. Murdoch's favorite recitations were the stirring poems of George H. Boker, Julia Ward Howe, Francis de Haes Janvier, and T. Buchanan Read. In 1863, a relative or friend of Murdoch was courtmartialled for sleeping on post, or for some other serious violation of military duty, and Murdoch's sister-in-law, Adelaide, visited Washington to intercede for the boy's life. A Mrs. Guthrie, of Wheeling, having known Major Eckert when both were children, asked him to secure an interview with the President for Mrs. Murdoch. This was done, and the appeal was so effective that the President pardoned the soldier. Whether this man was named William Scott (from Vermont), whose

pardon by Lincoln inspired Janvier to write his beautiful poem entitled "The Sleeping Sentinel," is not recorded. Murdoch, in his volume *Patriotism in Poetry and Prose*, says of this poem:

I had the pleasure of reading this beautiful and touching poem for the first time to Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln and a select party of their friends at the White House, by invitation of Senator Foote of Vermont. . . . Its second reading was in the Senate Chamber, the proceeds being for the aid of our sick and wounded soldiers.

Soon after the relative (or friend) of Murdoch had been pardoned, the latter visited Washington and went with Eckert to the White House to thank the President in person for his merciful act. During the interview Lincoln told Murdoch how much he appreciated his splendid work for the Union cause, and added that if agreeable he would like him to recite something from Shakespeare. Murdoch said he would prefer to do that on another occasion so that he might select something suitable and prepare himself, but that if the President would allow him he would then recite a poem entitled "Mustered Out," by W. E. Miller. The words are put into the mouth of a dying soldier, who in one of the verses says:

I am no saint;
 But, boys, say a prayer. There's one that begins
 "Our Father," and then says "Forgive us our sins."
 Don't forget that part, say that strongly and then
 I'll try to repeat it, and you'll say "Amen."

When the poem was finished, Murdoch asked permission to continue the theme by giving in full the

Lord's Prayer, and the President, who was visibly effected by Murdoch's fine rendering of the beautiful poem, nodded his assent. Murdoch then began, "Our Father, who art in heaven," and in a most reverent and devout manner repeated the whole prayer, Mr. Lincoln audibly joining in the closing petitions. When he had concluded, all three of the group were in tears. Eckert says that on the following day, Murdoch, accompanied by the late Mr. Philip (of Philip and Solomons) visited Mr. Lincoln and gave some readings from Shakespeare. On a later occasion (February 15, 1864), Mr. Nicolay, private secretary, wrote Murdoch thus:

MY DEAR SIR:

The President directs me to send you the enclosed little poem and to request that if entirely convenient, you will please to read it at the Senate Chamber this evening.

The printed enclosure reads thus:

"The following lines are written by one of the most distinguished statesmen of the United States in answer to a lady's inquiry whether he was for peace."

NOTE BY AUTHOR: There were in all eight stanzas, the first of which only is here quoted, as follows:

Am I for Peace? Yes!
 For the peace which rings out from the cannon't throat,
 And the suasion of shot and shell,
 Till rebellion's spirit is trampled down,
 To the depths of its kindred hell.

Morse Signal Interests Lincoln

In the summer months, Lincoln, with his family, lived in one of the cottages at the Soldiers' Home, and so it was arranged that there should be an exhibition (for his special benefit) of Morse signaling to and from the Smithsonian, and on the evening of August 24, 1864, Major Eckert and I went to the Soldiers' Home with suitable instruments, our comrades, Chandler and Dwight, having gone to the Smithsonian Institution with a similar equipment. My diary records that there were present on the tower of the Soldiers' Home, besides the operators, the President, Rear-Admiral Davis of the Navy Department, Colonel Nicodemus of the Signal Corps, and Colonel Dimmick of the Army. We were able to send Morse signals to the roof of the Smithsonian and receive responses from Chandler and Dwight. Professor Joseph Henry was present and witnessed our experiments. Mr. Lincoln was greatly interested in this exhibition and expressed the opinion that the signal system of both the army and navy could and would be improved so as to become of immense value to the Government. This has, in fact, been done, and our efforts of over sixty years ago now appear rudimentary.

Lincoln Disavows Famous Story

It has been said that all standard jokes may be traced to antiquity. Even Christ's saying to the Pharisees, "Ye strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," may be the prototype of the current phrase

“Handsome is that handsome does,” or to Christ’s other saying, “For ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter but inside ye are full of extortion and excess.”

Lincoln must have had this parallelism of jokes at the back of his mind when in the telegraph office reference was made to Grant’s drinking habits and to Lincoln’s reputed remark that he wished Grant would tell him the brand of whiskey he drank so that he might order some for his other generals. Lincoln denied this, adding that he presumed the originator of the story must have had in his mind the historic remark of King George, who, when told that General Wolfe in Canada was mad, said he wished Wolfe would bite some of his other generals.

Sir Charles Burnand, long editor of *Punch*, once said that some of *Punch’s* jokes after travelling around the world would come back dressed in new garb, not expecting to be recognized by *Punch* as the children of his brain.

Foiling a Wire Tapper

On November 25, 1862, Mr. Lincoln wrote the following telegram to General Burnside at Falmouth, Virginia:

If I should be in boat off Aquia Creek at dark tomorrow (Wednesday) evening, could you, without inconvenience, meet me and pass an hour or two with me?

This message was put into a home-made cipher because we had detected a Confederate operator on our wire about that time. The following is the cipher form:

Washington, D. C., November 25, 1862.

BURNSIDE, Falmouth, Virginia:

Can Inn Ale me withe 2 oar our Ann pas Ann me
flesh ends N. V. Corn Inn out with U cut Inn heaven
day nest Wed. roe Moore Tom darkey hat Greek Why
Hawk Abbott Inn B chewed I if.

BATES.

By reading the above backward, observing the phonetics, and bearing in mind that "flesh" is the equivalent of "meat," the real meaning is easily found. It cannot be said that this specimen exhibits specially clever work on the part of the War Department staff, nor is it likely that the Confederate operator, if he overheard its transmission, had much trouble in unraveling its meaning. As to this we can only conjecture.

Lincoln's Duplex Theory

During the war, inventors were experimenting with duplex telegraphy. The subject being discussed by the operators, Mr. Lincoln remarked that the idea was paralleled in the human system. "For instance," he said, "when reading a book my eyes are taking a photo of what I am reading and telegraphs to the brain, which at the same moment telegraphs back to my vocal organs, and I read aloud the words and sentences on which my eyes are resting."

Lincoln Saves Eckert

(Captain) Eckert, accompanied by General Sanford and Governor Brough, went to the War Department one afternoon, and they were ushered

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into the Secretary's presence, and—stood for at least ten minutes while Stanton continued to write at his desk, without looking up to see who his callers were. Finally Stanton turned and asked Eckert what he wanted.

The latter replied, "General Sanford tells me that you have sent for me and I am here."

Then Stanton, in a loud voice, said he understood that Captain Eckert had been neglecting his duties, and was absent from his office much of the time, and allowed newspaper men to have access to the telegraphic office; also that he was an unfit person for the position he occupied.

Eckert replied that he had not neglected his duties—that he had attended to them strictly and faithfully; that any statements to the contrary were false; that for over three months he had been at his post of duty almost constantly and had hardly taken off his clothes during that time except to change his linen; that he had remained in his office many times all night long, and that he seldom slept in his bed at his hotel, and, finally inasmuch as it appeared that his services were not acceptable, he insisted upon his resignation being accepted.

Just then Eckert felt an arm placed on his shoulder, and, supposing it to be that of General Sanford, who had all this time remained standing with him, turned around and was surprised to find that, instead, it was the hand of the President, who had entered the room while the discussion was going on.

Lincoln, still with his hand on the Captain's shoulder, said to Stanton:

"Mr. Secretary, I think you must be mistaken about this young man neglecting his duties, for I have been a daily caller at General McClellan's headquarters for the last three or four months, and I have always found Eckert at his post. I have been there often before breakfast, and in the evening as well, and frequently late at night, and several hours before dawn to get the latest news from the army. Eckert was always there, and I never observed any reporters or outsiders in the office."

Stanton was so impressed by the intercession of Lincoln, General Sanford, and Governor Brough that he quietly took from his desk a package of papers and opening one, said, "I believe this is your resignation, is it not, Sir"?

Captain Eckert said it was; whereupon Stanton tore it up and dropped the pieces on the floor. He then opened another paper and said:

"This is the order dismissing you from the army, which I had already signed, but it will not be executed." Then he tore up the order of dismissal and said:

"I owe you an apology, Captain, for not having gone to General McClellan's office to see for myself the situation of affairs. You are no longer Captain Eckert; I shall appoint you a Major as soon as the commission can be made out, and I shall make you a further acknowledgment in another manner."

So, from that Sunday afternoon in February,

1862, until just before the close of the war, Eckert's military title was "Major." The additional acknowledgment referred to by Secretary Stanton consisted of a horse and carriage purchased for Eckert's use in the performance of his official duties.

"Then You Avoid Collisions"

One day, Secretary Seward, who was not renowned as a joker, said he had been told that a short time before, on a street crossing, Lincoln had been seen to turn out in the mud to give a colored woman a chance to pass. "Yes," said Lincoln, "it has been a rule of my life that if people would not turn out for me, I would turn out for them. Then you avoid collisions."

Barking Dogs

Lincoln once received a telegram telling of a skirmish in Virginia when the opposing troops fought the enemy to a standstill, which he said reminded him of two dogs barking through a fence, continuing their barking until they came to a gate, when both ran off in opposite directions.

Snuffing East Wind

Lincoln told this story once of an old slave whose master had chided him many times for taking up so much of his time with preaching. His master told him he would whip him next time he caught him at that game. The slave said, "Well, Marsa, I just can't help it—when the Bible texts come in

my mind, I must speak it." The master was interested to know whether his slave really knew the Bible well, so he asked him, "Sam, there is one text in the Bible that I never could understand—that is this—that the ass snuffeth up the east wind. Now what do you make of that text?" "Well, Marsa—I thinks that ass would have to snuff a long time before she got fat."

Political Adullamites

At the Cleveland Convention in 1864, it was expected that at least 1,000 delegates would attend, but the newspapers mentioned that at no time were there more than 400. This reminded the editor of a New York paper of the Bible incident where the 400, in debt and distress, fled to the Cave of Adullam. When the newspaper containing the article was received, Lincoln asked for a copy of the Bible, so that he could refer to the text. Albert Johnson, Stanton's private secretary, a very obsequious, dapper little man, offered to get a Bible, which he brought in and laid before the President, who read the text with interest. Meantime, Johnson had left the room. Lincoln, getting up with a smile on his face, said: "I am always interested in the movements of Johnson, and now let me show you how he did that." Accordingly, Lincoln took the Bible in his hands, presented it in Johnson's very obsequious style to Major Eckert and said, "That is the way Johnson did that." This created a laugh among the listeners.

Supporting Sheridan

During Grant's final campaign, the President asked about Sheridan's whereabouts and the route taken by a scout's recent report. The latter had told where he had last seen Sheridan when he received the little packet he brought, and added that he was a native Virginian, and had been able to come through the city of Richmond without detection. After some further conversation and an expression of thanks from the President, the scout backed out of the tent and disappeared forever, so far as Cipher-Operator Beckwith knew. The other two scouts with him were never heard from, and were probably captured by the enemy. Sheridan's dispatch was most welcome to Lincoln and Grant, and 20,000 horseshoes and other much-needed supplies were soon on their way to Pamunkey.

War's Closing Incidents

In March, 1865, Grant directed Beckwith, his cipher-operator, to report to the President at City Point and keep him in touch by telegraph with the army in its advance movement, and with the War Department at Washington. It may therefore be truthfully said that for the next two weeks out of the three remaining to him, Lincoln "lived in the telegraph office," for he and Beckwith were almost inseparable, and the wires were kept busy with dispatches to and from the President. Beckwith's tent adjoined the larger tent of Colonel Bowers, which Lincoln made his headquarters.

It was by telegraph on Monday, after reaching City Point, that Lincoln indorsed Stanton's order of exercises to be observed at Fort Sumter on the anniversary of its surrender, in which many notables, including Colonel Robert Anderson, Admiral Dahlgren, Adjutant General Townsend, Captain Gustavus V. Fox, the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, the Rev. R. S. Storrs, and others were to participate.

The following telegram shows Lincoln's close attention to details and the tenacity of his memory:

City Point, Va., March 27, 1865—3.35 P.M.
HON. SECRETARY OF WAR, Washington, D. C.

Yours enclosing Fort Sumter order received. I think of but one suggestion. I feel quite confident that Sumter fell on the 13th, and not on the 14th of April, as you have it. It fell on Saturday, the 13th; the first call for troops on our part was got up on Sunday, the 14th, and given date and issued on Monday, the 15th. Look up the old almanac and other data and see if I am not right.

A. LINCOLN.

The President's recollection was correct, as the records proved. Another illustration of Lincoln's aptitude for fixing dates is shown in his remark one day that it was his habit to fasten in his mind the name of the week-day on which the month came in, as he was thus reminded that the 15th and 29th occurred on the same day of the week. He then looked forward to the first day of the following month as falling on a certain day of the week, and so on through the whole year.

Booth and Payne Plotting

While in prison, the conspirator Payne told Eckert of three occasions when he was close to Lincoln and could have shot him if so inclined. Once, during the winter of 1865, Booth and Payne had walked through the White House grounds in the daytime. Booth urged Payne to send a card in to Lincoln, using any name that he might see fit, and when he went into the room to shoot the President. Payne said he refused, and Booth berated him soundly for cowardice.

At another time, April 11, 1865, when Lincoln was making his Louisiana reconstruction speech from the White House (which I heard), Booth and Payne were in the crowd of listeners, and Booth asked Payne to take out his revolver and fire. Payne said, "No, I will not do it." Again Booth damned Payne and urged him to commit the deed then and there, saying that the crowd was so great that it could be done without detection, but Payne was obdurate, not yet having screwed his courage up to the point of murder.

The third occasion was under the following circumstances: Payne, in prison, suddenly turned to Eckert and said, "Major, were you not the man walking with the President through the White House grounds late one frosty night last winter?" Payne said that he had secreted himself behind the bushes in front of the old conservatory where the executive offices now stand, waiting for Lincoln to return from the War Department. There had been

a light rain, and it then got colder, and there was a crust of ice so that it crackled under one's foot. Payne said he heard footsteps from the direction of the War Department, and when the persons got nearly opposite where he was hiding, he saw Lincoln and another man coming along the walk, and heard the President say, "Major, spread out, spread out, or we shall break through the ice."

The two then stopped, and Lincoln told of an incident when he was a young man. The nearest grist-mill to his father's house was seven or eight miles distant, and the custom was to take the grain to the mill, wait for it to be ground, and then carry the meal back home, leaving a toll for the miller. He said that on one occasion, during a very cold spell, he and a party of neighbors were returning from the mill with their bags, and they came to the mill brook, which was frozen over so that they could cross on it, but when they were part way over the ice cracked, and some one said, "Spread out, spread out, or we shall break through the ice." Eckert told Payne that he recalled the incident, that he was with Lincoln that night, and had walked home with him many other nights from the War Department to the White House.

Early Morning Incident

John C. Hatter, Secretary Stanton's messenger, told me in July, 1907, that near the end of 1864 he accompanied the President from the War Department to the White House at two o'clock in the morning. The weather had changed from rain to

sleet, and there was a coat of ice on the ground. When the gate outside the War Department (opposite the present executive offices) was opened to let the President pass through, they heard a sound as of some one running along the fence, and over the frozen ground.

Upon examining the fence they found three palings removed, which Hatter said were not out of place in the evening when he came on duty. Mr. Lincoln said, "What was that noise?" Hatter answered that it sounded like some one running through the bushes toward the conservatory.

The President asked Hatter not to say anything to any one about the incident, and they resumed their walk to the White House.

In reply to my inquiry on the subject, Rear-Admiral Asa Walker, Superintendent of the Naval Observatory, records the following:

January 21, 1865. Began raining moderately at 8.50 A.M. Changed soon into sleet, continuing until 9 P.M. or later. Stopped before midnight. The formation of a crust on the snow would probably not be mentioned in our records.

Eckert Justifies Lincoln's Confidence

Lincoln was very fond of our Chief, Major Thomas T. Eckert, and when, in January, 1865, it became necessary to select someone to represent Lincoln at the preliminary meeting with the three Confederate Peace Commissioners, Stephens, Campbell, and Hunter, at City Point, instead of having General Grant receive them, President:

Lincoln selected Eckert to represent him, giving him specific written instructions. Lincoln's Message to Congress, February 3, 1865, tells how faithfully Eckert's mission was fulfilled. Robert Lincoln says of this incident, "Father selected 'Tom Eckert,' as he called him, for this business because, to use his language, as nearly as I can remember it, 'he never failed to do completely what was given him to do and to do it in the most complete and tactful manner and to refrain from doing anything outside which would hurt his mission.'"

Distressing Mrs. Lincoln

Once, not more than sixty days before his death, Lincoln came into the telegraph office with a picture of himself, which had been addressed to his wife and sent to her by mail. The sender had added to the picture a rope around the neck and then upward tautly drawn, to indicate his hellish desire. Mr. Lincoln remarked that it had caused Mrs. Lincoln some anxiety, which he did not share, although he added some words of regret that any human being could be so devoid of feeling as thus to wound an innocent woman. He said that he had received many communications of like import and had come to give them only a passing thought.

Mirth at Last Cabinet Meeting

After the evident collapse of the Confederacy, and especially after Appomattox, Lincoln was delightfully jovial, radiating sunshine whenever he

came into the War Department telegraph office, where he spent literally hours at a stretch, waiting for more news from Grant, Sherman, Meade, or Sheridan and Thomas.

At the last cabinet meeting, April 13, 1865, following an interchange of views over certain departmental matters, there came up for discussion something all were interested in, namely, the disposition of Jefferson Davis, who, it was hoped and expected, would soon be a prisoner of war in the custody of our troops on southern soil.

There were all sorts of suggestions. One cabinet member thought hanging was none too severe. Another wanted him locked up for a term of years. Each member of the cabinet voiced his judgment. There was intense curiosity about the President's views. Previously, in a private conversation, he had suggested to Assistant Secretary of War Charles A. Dana, afterward editor of *The New York Sun*, who had asked him about the disposition of Jacob Thompson, Secretary of War in Davis' cabinet, arrested at Portland, Maine, in trying to reach Canada, that (to use his own words):

“When you have got an elephant by the hind leg, and he is trying to run away, it's best to let him run.”

Lincoln listened to everyone, and when it came time for him to speak, his face took on a quizzical expression—a signal that something out of the ordinary was coming—and then he said:

“What to do with Jefferson Davis reminds me of an Irishman in Springfield, Illinois, who, dur-

ing a temperance wave signed a total abstinence pledge. He withstood all pressure to get him to break his pledge. On one extraordinary occasion, however, when all the others were drinking, and when his friends bore on harder than ever, Pat said, 'I'll not break me pledge; but if someone should put some whiskey in me glass of water unbeknownst-like to me, shure, I'd be all the happier.'

"And so," said Lincoln, "if it could be managed that Davis could escape unbeknownst-like to the government, it might be a happy solution of the matter."

The Man With Two Mothers

Some years ago, Clarence Bowen, Vice-President of the Genealogical Society, asked me to deliver an address before the Society with my comrades Tinker and Chandler; also General Wilson, historian (not the captor of Jefferson Davis). D. O. Mills was present on the platform. General Wilson told this story, which will be recalled by Mr. Bowen.

He said that after Lincoln's nomination, he had occasion to go to Springfield to meet Mr. Lincoln, who told him that he had just returned from a meeting held in the Springfield insane asylum, and in passing through one of the halls, a little old man stood in the doorway and said:

"Why do you not salute me?" Mr. Lincoln said, "Why should I salute you?" "Because I am Julius Caesar," said the man. "Ah! Julius Caesar

—I am glad to meet you,” and Lincoln passed on to the board meeting. After the meeting he again passed through the hall and was again accosted by the same little man, who asked why he did not salute him. Mr. Lincoln replied, as before, “Why should I salute you?” The man answered, “Because I am Napoleon Bonaparte.” “Ah! Napoleon, when we met this morning you told me you were Julius Caesar.” He answered, “But that was by my other mother. I had two mothers, you know.”

Last Story in the Cipher Room

The last story told in the telegraph office, vouched for by Cipher-Operator Tinker, is as follows:

“On April 14, 1865, the day Lincoln was shot, he came to the telegraph office while I was transmitting a cipher dispatch that was couched in very laconic terms. Lincoln read the dispatch, and after taking in the meaning of the terse phrases, he turned to me and with his accustomed smile said, ‘Mr. Tinker, that reminds me of the old story of the Scotch lassie on her way to market with a basket of eggs for sale. She had just forded a small stream with her skirts well drawn up, when a waggoner on the opposite side of the stream called out, ‘Good morning, my lassie; how deep’s the brook and what’s the price of eggs?’ She answered, ‘Knee deep and a sixpence.’”

“Mr. Lincoln, still with a smile, lifted his coat tails in imitation of the maiden and passed into Secretary Stanton’s room adjoining.

“That was the last time I saw Mr. Lincoln alive.”

My War Diary, April 15, 1865, the day Lincoln died, contains the following entry:

Abraham Lincoln, “First pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”—James 3:17.

